



TOM CILMI
Suffolk County Legislator
10th District

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Budget Committee approves \$158 Million Debt
Again Puts off long term budget planning

Yesterday, the Suffolk County Legislature's Budget and Finance Committee unanimously approved a bill authorizing the County Comptroller to issue nearly \$160 million of debt to cover operating expenses and continued to reject legislation aimed at long-term budget planning and transparency.

Two bills, one to authorize \$120 million in "revenue anticipation notes" designed to provide cash flow to the County in anticipation of future revenue, and one to borrow \$38.5 million to pay a retroactive contract settlement to Corrections Officers, both passed with all five members voting yes.

On the other hand, a bill sponsored by Legislator Tom Cilmi calling for the County Executive to submit a three year budget plan in addition to his annual operating budget proposal was tabled for the second time this year.

"I am frankly astounded," said Legislator Tom Cilmi (R-East Islip), a long-time proponent of budget transparency measures. "The County Executive began his first term in office with what he should have expected to be a balanced budget, only to proclaim three months later that the County had a three year projected budget deficit of more than \$400 million, a projection which later rose to more than \$530 million. He began his 2013 State of the County address by saying the County is in financial crisis. County Comptroller Joe Sawicki said by 2014 the County will be 'out of one-shots' and will have to make 'big structural changes' to its budget. Even newly-minted Legislator Al Krupski recognizes the County's fiscal problems and said the County is on thin ice."

"Why, then, would the Administration and the Legislature oppose a bill calling for long-term budget planning," questioned Cilmi. "It doesn't make any sense."

Cilmi said he doesn't know how he will vote on either of the two bills yet, but said that without a long-term plan on how the County is going to deal with structural imbalances and huge deficits, he is inclined to oppose such significant borrowing. He said, "We cannot continue to fiddle around the edges while our County is heading towards a fiscal cliff. We need a long-term plan and we need it now."